

Message Text

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ACTION SY-05

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /006 W
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R 012034Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5527
INFO AMCONSUL QUEBEC

C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 10050

SY CHANNEL

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ASEC
SUBJECT: NIGHT GUARD FOR CONGEN, QUEBEC CITY

1. BOTH THE EMBASSY THE THE CONSULATE ARE DISAPPOINTED IN SY'S RECOMMENDATION FOR THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF A NIGHT GUARD AT THE CONGEN. IN THE INITIAL REQUEST FOR FUNDING, THE TERRORISM ASPECT WAS PLAYED DOWN DUE TO THE SENSITIVITY OF THE SUBJECT AND THE RELUCTANCE OF THE RSO TO COMMENT ON CANADIAN POLITICAL ISSUES. THEREFORE, THE FIRE HAZARD WAS EMPHASIZED WITH THE HOPE THE DEPARTMENT WOULD CONSIDER IT AS AMPLE JUSTIFICATION.

2. IT IS GENERALLY AGREED THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN QUEBEC IS MORE VOLATILE THAN ELSEWHERE IN CANADA. THIS IS DUE TO THE SEPARATIST MOVEMENT WHICH EXISTS AND THE PARTI QUEBECOIS POLITICAL PARTY WHICH GOVERNS THE PROVINCE. WHILE NEITHER HARBOR ANY ANTI-AMERICAN SENTIMENT AT PRESENT, NO ONE CAN FORESEE WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS. IT WAS ONLY SEVEN YEARS AGO WHEN THE FLQ TERRORIZED THE PROVINCE IN AN ATTEMPT TO BREAK AWAY FROM CANADA. SOME OF THEIR ACTIONS WERE DIRECTED AGAINST THE CONSULATE INCLUDING AN EXPLOSIVE DEVICE PLACED IN FRONT OF THE BUILDING. WITH THIS HISTORY OF POLITICAL UNREST, THE RSO VIEWS THE POTENTIAL FOR
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SERIOUS INCIDENTS IN THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC AS MORE LIKELY THAN ELSEWHERE IN CANADA. APPARENTLY OTHER FOREIGN DIPLO-MATIC MISSIONS HAVE THE SAME APPREHENSION BECAUSE THE BRITISH CONSULATE AND POSSIBLY OTHERS EMPLOY LOCAL GUARDS TO PROTECT THEIR MISSIONS. SOMETIME WITHIN THE NEXT 12 TO 24 MONTHS A REFERENDUM IS SCHEDULED FOR THE PROVINCE'S ELECTORATE TO VOTE ON WHETHER OR NOT TO SEPARATE. REGARD-

LESS OF THE DECISION, ONE MUST ASSUME THE EMOTIONS OF THE POPULACE WILL BECOME MORE HEATED CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT FOR POSSIBLE VIOLENCE. WITH THE CONSULATE GENERAL LOCATED IN THE OLD TOWN SECTION AND SITUATED ACROSS THE STREET FROM A LARGE PUBLIC PARK, IT WOULD BECOME A NATURAL TARGET FOR VANDALISM OR WORSE. IF THIS SITUATION DEVELOPES, SY IS AGAIN REMINDED THE CONSULATE BUILDING ACCOMMODATES THE CONSUL GENERAL'S RESIDENCE AND ONE OTHER APARTMENT.

3. THE EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE ANOTHER EVALUATION OF THE PROPOSAL FOR A NIGHT GUARD IRRESPECTIVE OF WHETHER THERE IS SUFFICIENT JUSTIFICATION FROM AN ANTI-TERRORISM POINT OF VIEW. IF THE DEPARTMENT (SY) COULD PROVIDE FUNDING FOR THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR, THE EMBASSY COULD THEN ALLOCATE FUNDS FOR THE RECURRING ANNUAL COSTS IN ITS NEXT BUDGET SUBMISSION.

4. PLEASE ADVISE. ENDERS

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